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Volunteer Policy (Libraries Tasmania)

Department for Education,
Children and Young People



**LIBRARIES
TASMANIA**



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1 Purpose

The Libraries Tasmania Volunteer Policy outlines our approach to managing volunteers and volunteer activity to support our services and programs. The Policy promotes consistent practices and clarifies the expectations and conditions for Libraries Tasmania's volunteers.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all Libraries Tasmania staff and volunteers.

In most cases Libraries Tasmania volunteers undertake volunteer duties at Libraries Tasmania's physical locations. The exceptions to this are:

- [Home Library Couriers](#) who personally deliver library lending items to Home Library Service clients who are unable to visit a library in-person.
- [Adult Literacy Tutors](#) who work one-to-one with literacy clients where literacy tutoring occurs at an alternative public site such as a Neighbourhood House or through remotely online. Refer to [Adult Literacy Service Policy](#) for further information.

This policy does not apply to:

- Digital volunteers who assist the State Library and Archives to transcribe historical records online.
- Individuals undertaking short-term work experience.
- Students undertaking research projects.
- Members of the public involved in community programs operating in Libraries Tasmania spaces.
- Members of advisory boards and committees.
- Libraries Tasmania staff volunteering in other organisations.

3 Policy Statement

Volunteers make an invaluable contribution to Libraries Tasmania and enrich people's lives. Our volunteers are diverse and include people of all ages and backgrounds who bring their unique experience, enthusiasm and knowledge to the role.

Libraries Tasmania operates a structured volunteer program where volunteer engagement is a considered and planned part of Libraries Tasmania's strategic development. Effective volunteer engagement requires effective organisational leadership, culture and structure that supports and values the role of volunteers.

Volunteers play in helping us achieve our [Strategic Directions](#). They do this by:

- Contributing their expertise, knowledge and time for the benefit of individuals and the communities we serve.
- Enhancing our services and programs for onsite and online user experiences.
- Complementing and enhancing the work of paid staff.

Volunteers have rights, which include the right to work in a safe and supportive environment with appropriate infrastructure and effective management practices. They also have responsibilities, which include acting responsibly, being accountable for their actions, respecting the Libraries Tasmania's values and practices and adhering to organisational [policies](#).

The [Volunteer Management Procedure](#) (Libraries Tasmania) provides details on how this Policy is implemented.

3.1 Volunteer roles

Libraries Tasmania volunteering opportunities vary depending on the services and programs offered at individual libraries. Volunteers assist our clients through a variety of roles including:

- [Adult Learning Mentor](#)
- [Adult Literacy Tutor](#)
- [Home Library Service Courier](#)
- [Programs and Services Support \(includes 26Ten volunteers\)](#)
- [State Library of Tasmania Volunteer](#)

Current volunteer opportunities are promoted on our website, see [Volunteer with us](#).

3.2 Recruitment, selection, induction, engagement

Volunteer recruitment and management occurs at the local level according to the needs of the individual library or business unit. Volunteers are provided with appropriate induction, training, supervision and a safe working environment.

3.2.1 Eligibility

To volunteer with Libraries Tasmania an individual must:

- Hold Australian citizenship or an appropriate Visa which allows them to volunteer in Australia.
- Have and maintain a current Tasmanian [Registration to Work with Vulnerable People](#) (RWVP) – refer to section 3.4.1.

Volunteers under 18 years of age must have written permission from their parent or carer to volunteer with Libraries Tasmania. They will also be supervised by another volunteer or staff member (as appropriate) when undertaking volunteer duties.

3.2.2 Selection

People of all ages and walks of life volunteer. Volunteers are selected based on their interest, knowledge, skills or attributes relevant to the volunteering role. Libraries Tasmania values workplace diversity and we encourage people from all backgrounds to apply to volunteer with us including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people of all ages, abilities, sexual orientations, and gender identities.

Reference checks will be conducted as part of determining volunteer suitability.

3.2.3 Induction and training

Volunteers will receive a formal induction to Libraries Tasmania.

Volunteers must undertake mandatory training as required by the Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP). Mandatory training for all volunteers includes:

- Work Health and Safety – how to identify and report incidents and hazards.
- [Safeguarding Training](#) - an animated video training module outlining DECYP's commitment to keeping children safe and a volunteer's legal obligation to report child safety or wellbeing concerns.
- Critical Incident and Emergency Procedures – understand local business unit procedures in managing critical incidents and emergencies such as fire, evacuation, lockdown and first aid.

There may be additional learning opportunities for volunteers as appropriate.

3.3 Behaviour and conduct expectations

Prior to undertaking volunteering duties, Libraries Tasmania volunteers must agree to the Volunteer Commitment. The Volunteer Commitment outlines the behaviour, conduct, responsibilities and obligations and other terms for both Libraries Tasmania and the volunteers. By signing the Volunteer Agreement, Libraries Tasmania and the volunteer make a commitment to each other and to Libraries Tasmania's values.

Along with paid workers, volunteers must also comply with the DECYP [Conduct and Behaviour Standards](#) and [Professional Standards for Staff - Policy](#) (both under review in 2024).

3.4 Safeguarding children and young people

DECYP is committed to safeguarding the rights of children and young people to have an education, to be heard, and to be kept safe from harm. Child safety is everyone's responsibility, including volunteers with Libraries Tasmania. Refer to DECYP [Safeguarding Framework](#) for more information.

Volunteers are expected to contribute to a child-safe organisational culture and undertake the required mandatory safeguarding training (refer 3.2.3 above). They must report any concerns for a child and young person's safety and wellbeing to the [Strong Families and Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line](#).

Volunteer behaviour that poses a risk to the safety and wellbeing of children will be reported to Tasmania Police immediately.

3.4.1 Registration to Work with Vulnerable People

All Libraries Tasmania volunteers must have and maintain a current Tasmanian RWVP as per the [Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Policy](#), except volunteers who are:

- Under 16 years of age.
- Accompanied by a carer through a disability plan, in which case the carer must hold a current RWVP, and the volunteer must undertake allocated tasks under the carer's supervision.

For new volunteers, Libraries Tasmania will reimburse RWVP fees after the volunteer has completed four volunteering sessions including the induction session. A volunteering session is an agreed period where a volunteer undertakes allocated tasks (usually at least two hours of activity).

Libraries Tasmania will reimburse existing volunteers for the annual RWVP registration fee with proof of payment.

3.4.2 Mandatory reporting

All Libraries Tasmania staff including volunteers are mandatory reporters under the [Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 \(Tas\)](#). Volunteers must report any incidents, disclosures or concerns for a child or young person's safety, including child sexual abuse in accordance with the [Mandatory Reporting Procedure](#).

All volunteers will be made aware of their legal obligations and DECYP's commitment for safeguarding children and young people. Although volunteers may not work directly with children in the course of undertaking volunteer duties, they must read and abide by the DECYP [Safeguarding Framework](#) and any relevant policies and procedures contained in the Framework as part of their induction.

3.5 Volunteer management

Libraries Tasmania's Business Services unit provides centralised, strategic oversight for volunteer management. Each library or business unit site have local designated staff who coordinate and supervise their volunteers.

Records created during the course of a volunteer's engagement with Libraries Tasmania will be managed as per [DECYP's Records Management Policy](#) and [Document and Records Management Procedure](#).

Any creative works produced by volunteers as part of their voluntary services with Libraries Tasmania will remain the property of the Crown, except by prior agreement. Volunteers' intellectual work will be acknowledged and attributed where appropriate.

Libraries Tasmania may contribute to reimbursing expenses incurred by a volunteer during their volunteering as negotiated and agreed in advance with the local coordinator and/or manager.

Libraries Tasmania reports on volunteer activity including the number of volunteers and volunteer hours. Volunteer hours must be recorded on timesheets, rosters, logbooks or registers

Libraries Tasmania may at any time make changes to or discontinue the volunteer's assigned volunteer activities.

3.6 Work health and safety and duty of care

Libraries Tasmania volunteers are considered workers under the [Work, Health and Safety Act 2012](#). Libraries Tasmania has a duty of care to volunteers to provide a healthy and safe workplace. Every person has a duty of care to all persons in the workplace.

Volunteers must be made aware of and understand organisation-wide policy and local business unit procedures for managing critical incidents and emergencies, such as fire, evacuation, lockdown, and first aid.

All volunteers must:

- Have an understanding of and comply with the principles of the [State Service Principles and Code of Conduct \(State Service Act 2000\)](#).
- Promote a safety-first workplace where we take care of each other to prevent work-related injury and illness and provide safe and healthy workplaces and activities.
- Take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of themselves and others.
- Take reasonable care that their actions or omissions do not adversely affect a child or young person's safety and wellbeing.
- Report hazards, accidents, incidents, injuries or illnesses to their supervisor.
- Follow any policy, procedure and instruction relating to health and safety at the workplace that has been notified to workers.
- Avoid intentionally or recklessly interfering with or misusing anything provided at the workplace for health and safety
- Inform their supervisor of any condition that may impact on their health and safety or that of others.

Volunteers are not eligible to claim for workers compensation under the same scheme that applies to paid workers. However there are alternative protections and coverages as detailed in the next section.

3.7 Insurance and indemnity

Libraries Tasmania volunteers are covered for no-fault personal accident and third party liability through the [Tasmanian Risk Management Fund \(TRMF\)](#). This cover applies whilst volunteers are "on duty" at a Libraries Tasmania site during business hours, or outside of hours, or located elsewhere as agreed and documented.

DECYP indemnifies volunteers against costs for legal proceedings arising out of acts done (or omissions made) in good faith while performing volunteering tasks. Legal issues will be addressed in consultation with the [DECYP Legal Services](#) unit and the relevant manager.

To ensure insurance cover, the names of volunteers and the times they are on duty must be recorded by the designated volunteer coordinator at a Libraries Tasmanian site or by the volunteer when working at an alternate site or when working remotely.

The Department of Treasury and Finance's [TRMF Cover for Agency Volunteers](#) provides further information on the extent of cover for volunteers.

3.8 Confidentiality

Libraries Tasmania handles confidential material, including personal information. Volunteers may also encounter this information while performing their duties. They must understand the importance of preserving confidentiality as directed by the [State Service Code of Conduct](#). Failure to do so may lead to the ending the volunteer relationship.

Personal information will be dealt with as directed in the relevant State legislation, including the [Personal Information Protection Act 2004](#).

3.9 Volunteers receiving Job Seeker Allowance

Volunteers who are receiving a Services Australia Job Seeker Allowance may have their Libraries Tasmania volunteer hours count towards their “mutual obligation” activity. However, this is based on the needs of Libraries Tasmania and is at the discretion of the local manager and available volunteering opportunities. If agreed, the volunteer will arrange for the local manager or coordinator to complete the required Services Australia documentation and provide letter of support if required. Proof of hours as recorded by the volunteer’s timesheet may be used to support the Services Australia documentation.

Services Australia requires participating libraries to be registered as an approved voluntary work organisation. Individual libraries may apply for registration on the [Verification of voluntary work form \(Services Australia, Australian Government\)](#). Each library will be issued with an identification number which can be used for all libraries within a catchment. Identification numbers for libraries and catchment sites that have received previous approval can be found in Content Manager DOC/19/61692.

Libraries Tasmania does not participate in the Australian Government’s Work for the Dole program.

3.10 Libraries Tasmania responsibilities for volunteers

Libraries Tasmania is committed to provide a duty of support to volunteers as outlined in the Volunteer Commitment form and the additional responsibilities outlined below:

- Comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation in volunteer recruitment practices.
- Provide accurate information about Libraries Tasmania including our strategic directions.
- Provide a position description and information that clearly defines the volunteer role.
- Provide access to a grievance procedure and conflict resolution process.
- Provide effective induction and orientation to Libraries Tasmania and the sites(s) in which they will volunteer.
- Provide supervision and guidance as required.
- Ensure volunteers have a clear understanding of limits of authority and who they report to.
- Ensure volunteer feel part of the team by including them in meetings, social events etc – as appropriate.
- Entrust volunteers with confidential information as needed to conduct their role as discussed during volunteer induction and agreed to by signing the Libraries Tasmania volunteer commitment.
- Provide feedback on their activities and recognition of their contribution.
- Ensure volunteers are familiar with the principles and statements outlined in this policy.
- Allocate appropriate volunteer tasks and activities.
- Manage and respect a volunteers’ confidential and personal information under the principles of the [Personal Information Protection Act 2004](#).

3.11 Performance and recognition

Volunteers will be given adequate instruction and training needed to perform their roles and responsibilities in accordance with DECYP and Libraries Tasmania's policies and procedures and the Libraries Tasmania Volunteer Commitment.

Libraries Tasmania actively recognises volunteer contributions and achievements including through national Volunteer Week events.

Managers, delegates or local volunteer coordinators are responsible for volunteer supervision. Volunteers and their supervisor should meet at least annually to discuss performance and encourage two-way feedback. The frequency of these meetings will be determined by agreement and determined by the volunteer role. A volunteer's under-performance or misconduct issues are to be promptly identified, recorded, and addressed in line with the principles of natural justice.

3.12 Ending the volunteer relationship

Volunteer participation is at Libraries Tasmania's discretion.

Grounds to end the volunteer relationship, other than a volunteer choosing to leave may include breaching policy and procedure and/or the Volunteer Commitment, underperformance, unacceptable behaviour or having their RWVP suspended or cancelled. Further reasons including managing ending the volunteer relationship is available in the [Volunteer Management Procedure](#).

Volunteers are entitled to fair grievance procedures, but they are not protected by unfair dismissal laws. Although Libraries Tasmania can legally terminate a volunteer relationship at any time without due process, it is good practice to address and resolve any issues with the volunteer.

3.13 Grievance and dispute resolution

In the first instance, if a volunteer has a grievance about their volunteering or others, they should discuss it informally, as soon as possible, with their volunteer coordinator or supervisor. Their grievance should be taken seriously, and everything done to try to resolve the issue informally. Many concerns are likely to be resolved at this stage.

If a volunteer feels that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, they should put the complaint in writing to the appropriate person. Complaints or grievances will be dealt with efficiently and in a manner that is equitable and fair to all.

4 Related policies

- [Adult Literacy Service Policy](#) - Libraries Tasmania – staff only
- [Client Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) - Libraries Tasmania
- [Home Library Service Policy](#) - Libraries Tasmania – staff only
- [Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Policy](#) - DECYP
- [Professional Standards for Staff - Policy](#) – DECYP – staff only (under review in 2024)

5 Related procedures

- [Mandatory Reporting Procedure](#) –DECYP – staff only
- [Volunteer Management Procedure](#) - Libraries Tasmania – staff only
- [Work Health and Safety Roles and Responsibilities Procedure](#) – DECYP – staff only

6 Supporting information/tools

- [Adult Literacy Service Guidelines](#) - Libraries Tasmania – staff
- [Conduct and Behaviour Standards](#) – DECYP – staff (under review in 2024)
- [Libraries Tasmania Volunteer Induction Guide](#) Libraries Tasmania – staff only
- [Registration for Working with Vulnerable People](#) (Consumer, Building and Occupational Services, Department of Justice)
- [Safeguarding Framework](#) - DECYP
- [The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2015](#) - Volunteering Australia
- [Volunteer Management SharePoint page](#) - Libraries Tasmania – staff only

7 Definitions

Abuse (child abuse)

Any or all types of abuse and neglect, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, and exposure to or involvement in domestic and family violence.

Child sexual abuse

Any act (including grooming) that exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual activities that are beyond their understanding, are contrary to accepted community standards, or are outside what is permitted by law.

Volunteer

An individual who offers their services, skills and experiences of their own free will to perform agreed tasks, outside of those designated for paid staff, for no financial reimbursement (except for expenses incurred as detailed in this policy).

Volunteer Coordinator

This refers to Libraries Tasmania staff providing oversight and support to volunteers, and may include Operations Coordinators or Services Coordinators, as appropriate.

Volunteering

Giving time willingly for the common good and of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion; for no financial payment; and in designated volunteer positions only.

8 Legislation

Archives Act 1983

Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997

Libraries Act 1984

Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013

Personal Information Protection Act 2004.

State Service Act 2000

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